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# THE MISSION OF REFORM JUDAISM

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## ABSTRACT

Reform Judaism represents the latest phase in the evolution of Jewish religious thought. It grew out of the post-Mendelssohnian intellectual endeavor to adapt the historic faith of Judaism to the changed conditions in Jewish life, following the French Revolution. Its pioneers, *Jacobson*, etc., were called upon to fight apostasy on the one hand and rigid orthodoxy on the other. Originating in Germany, the Reform Movement spread to other West European countries, and found an especially congenial home in democratic America. Its theology, as formulated by *Abraham Geiger* and his followers, is based on reason and on the scientific study of the Bible, Talmud, and Jewish tradition. Through its renewed emphasis on the ethical side of life, Reform Judaism has added new vigor to the age-old religion of Israel.

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Jewish history since the close of the Bible has run in three main channels. The foremost tendency of Jewish life was that of unquestioned adherence to the various practices transmitted by former generations, a tendency which produced the law-books of the Bible, the Mishna, and the Shulchan Arukh. The Jewish spirit, however, was not confined within the channel of legalism. By the side of law, there was the stream of rationalism, which found expression in the philosophic works of Philo, Saadja, Gabriol, and notably of Maimonides. The emotional side of religion manifested itself in the mysticism of the Cabala. None of these is entirely devoid of at least a tinge of the other. It has been the pride of Judaism that it combines the appeal to reason and the longing of the heart with the daily *Mitzwoth* or duties. As a matter of fact these three tendencies have not often been at peace with one another. Legalism frequently waged war on mysticism and rationalism; the Cabala made little effort to conceal its impatience with law and with pure thought; and philosophy, also, looked upon Cabala as a filmy vapor which must dissolve before the sun of enlightenment, and upon legalism as a dry system which is lifeless without the stimulus of reason. The upper hand in

Judaism belonged to the representatives of the law. Their attacks on the spirit of rationalism form the darkest pages in our history. They were no more successful in removing reason from religion than they would have been in trying to tear out the brain from the head of a living man. Despite the burning of the great work of Maimonides, the excommunication of Spinoza, and the condemnation of Mendelssohn, the spirit of rationalism reasserted itself in the Reform Movement at the early part of the nineteenth century.

The word "reform" summons varied lines of thought to the minds of different people. To conservatives, who are ever "cross at the agony of a new idea," it appears as the death-knell of the order of religion, social life, or politics to which they are chained by force of habit. Other men and women, who are temperamentally chronic radicals, delight in reform because it bears the mark of novelty. Normal persons refuse to regard reform as either a toy or a dreadful specter, but as a policy, which occasionally comes as a compelling necessity, of changing the old appearance of things for a new and more attractive one, and of substituting a living for a dying social or religious order. No sane person will pull down a building just for the sheer delight of destruction; neither will any man, in his senses, refuse to repair or rebuild his house if its roof is torn, and its walls, doors, and windows broken. In social and religious life, too, people, though clinging with all their might to inherited institutions and customs sometimes find themselves compelled to renovate them in order to save them from decay.

A condition of this nature presented itself to the Jewish people in Western Europe about a century ago, when the walls of the Ghetto began to crumble. It is well known that almost throughout the Middle Ages the Jews were forced to live in separate quarters, which came to be known later as Ghettos. While this was the case in Mohammedan Spain and Turkey, it is in Christian countries that the Ghetto became a unique institution. In Italy, Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Hungary,

Germany, and Poland, the Jews were, as a rule, quarantined like lepers in separate sections of each city. These Ghettos were organized at different times and under varied local conditions. They were maintained not only by the desire on the part of the Jews to live together, a desire which deserves the highest praise, but mainly by the intolerant and narrow church policy of treating all those out of her pale as inferior beings.

For centuries the Ghetto constituted the "fatherland" of the Jew, offering him a friendly environment in the midst of a hostile world, a veritable oasis with laughing fountains and fruit-bearing trees in the midst of the barren wilderness. Every big city had such a little Jerusalem, where the Jew led his own, distinctly Jewish, life, which appeared all the more charming because of the sickly atmosphere of the cramped surroundings. The Jews were permitted to have courts of their own with full jurisdiction in almost all save criminal cases. They maintained elementary and high schools, where their sacred literature constituted the main subject of study. Living in seclusion, they developed their own dialects. In Teutonic countries, the German vernacular was tinged with Hebrew words and phrases and grew into Yiddish-Deutsch. This language—unjustly ridiculed by philistines as a contemptible jargon, as if most languages were not jargons—was lovingly preserved among the *Ashkenazim* or German Jews even when, after their expulsion from their country, they settled in Poland. To this day Yiddish forms the medium of expression of more than seven million Jews.

The Ghetto was by no means wholly covered with somber clouds. Often the sun shone upon it in full brilliance. Light and shade mingled in its many-sided life. Despite great odds, entailing heavy sacrifices, the Jews cheerfully observed their religious regulations. Their souls were uplifted to their Maker on the Sabbaths and holidays. Young and old eagerly participated in the pleasures of the joyous seasons and occasions. There were indeed moments in the life of the Ghetto

Jew when, in the words of Heine, he was no longer bewitched into a dog, but stood erect as Prince Israel, God beloved. The morality of the people was very high. As the eyes of the whole community were upon each individual, the incentive to right living was strong. The author of the article on the "Ghetto" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* writes that "the Bohemian chroniclers of the sixteenth century designate the Ghetto of Prague as a 'rose garden,' and add that when the gates of the Ghetto were closed at night there was not one woman inside whose reputation was in the least tarnished."

In most respects the Ghetto formed a state within a state. Only it lacked the political defenses of a state. At any time bigots could make their way into the peaceful Jewish quarter, and destroy the fruit of Jewish labor, and even expel inhabitants from their "fatherland." No wonder that the Jews regarded themselves as living in *Galuth*, in exile, and prayed for a speedy return to their historic fatherland, where they would again enjoy the blessings of peace, and worship God in freedom. It was not a mere formula which the Jew recited at the conclusion of his morning prayers: "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming." Patiently the Jew waited for the hour upon which the *Shofar* of the Messiah would resound, proclaiming to him the good tidings of liberty from persecution and from the spirit of intolerance. The eyes of great numbers of our people grew dim, straining to look into the future, and often mistook a will-o-the-wisp for a shining star, in the deep darkness that enveloped them. Many a pretender to the messiahship found ardent followers among the masses and was hailed as the long-expected Redeemer of the scattered tribes of Israel.

Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the trumpet did resound, but it was not the *Shofar* of the Messiah. It was the French Revolution, sounding the message of freedom, equality, and fraternity. To the Jew no less than to the other

members of the human family this message brought new life and new hope. In Germany as well as in France the spirit of liberalism found strong champions. Among these a place of eminence belongs to the famous dramatic poet Lessing, who exalted the Jew before the world, through his delightful comedy *Die Juden* and his masterpiece *Nathan der Weise*. Herder, too, must be singled out in the vast chorus of singers who heralded the dawn of religious toleration, which exerted a tremendous effect upon the life of the Jewish people.

The full significance of the spirit of liberalism and the directions into which it was tending may be seen in the life-story of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86). Born under dark skies, this favorite of God went to Berlin in pursuit of knowledge. There he won the friendship of Lessing and of other men of note, and gained universal recognition as a profound writer on aesthetics and philosophy. As a master of German style and as a devout Jew, he felt the need of translating the *Torah* (the Pentateuch) into pure German. The effect of this seemingly small service upon the cultural and religious life of the Jews assumed far-reaching proportions. On the one hand it promoted the study of Hebrew grammar, a subject hitherto neglected; and on the other it opened the door of German literature to those that were confined to the Ghetto walls and to talmudic learning. While some Orthodox leaders favored Mendelssohn's translation, the majority of rabbis opposed it as a revolutionary act which would strike the heart of Jewry. They felt more keenly than their opponents that with the substitution of pure German for Yiddish-Deutsch the whole institution of the Ghetto was endangered. Having no hope of erecting a palace, they naturally defended their hovel. They placed Mendelssohn's translation under the ban, but their opposition proved futile. The friends and followers of Mendelssohn devoted themselves to the task of remodeling the Jewish school system and of enlightening the masses. Regarding all the troubles from which the Jews suffered, as the result

of ignorance, they looked upon enlightenment as the chief remedy. They established modern schools in Berlin and in Breslau, in Seesen, in Frankfort-on-the-Main, and in Wolfenbütel, in Brody, and in Tarnopol, in Riga, in Odessa, and in Warsaw. They published periodicals for the dissemination of the new ideas, and extended the frontiers of the *Haskalah*, or enlightenment movement, as far as Russia-Poland.

Everywhere enlightenment spelled political emancipation to the enthusiastic followers of Mendelssohn. With joy they hailed the Patent of Toleration of the humane Emperor Joseph II for the Jews of Lower Austria, which, in part, established the civic equality of his Jewish subjects. In France, the home of the Revolution, Count Mirabeau, Count Clermont Tannere, and the Abbé Gregoire championed the Jewish cause. The first-born child of the French Revolution, the republican government of the United States of America, made the doctrines of equality of all men before the law without distinction of race or creed, the foundation of its constitution, thus guaranteeing also the rights of the Jews. When on September 27, 1791, the National Assembly enfranchised all the Jews of France, an Alsatian deputy significantly wrote to his constituents that Judaism in France thus became "nothing more than the name of a distinct religion." In other words, the political emancipation of Jewry demolished the whole institution of the Ghetto as far as France was concerned. The Jews no longer formed a state within the state but became the equals of their Christian neighbors in citizenship.

The example of France stimulated the Jews of other lands in their struggle for equality. There were some men like the rabbis of Pressburg who considered the desire for political equality on the part of Jews as sinful and inconsistent with Israel's messianic hopes. For the Jewish people to have followed such teaching would have necessitated turning backward the wheels of the chariot of time. The spirit of the age demanded that the Jews range themselves on the side of progress.

The aspiration for political equality on the part of the Jews in Germany involved: (1) a change of attitude toward the *Galuth*; for as full German citizens, they could no longer consider themselves to be strangers, expecting to be delivered from bondage by a Messiah; (2) the removal of the Ghetto; for as German citizens they could no longer continue to form a special Jewish state within the larger German Empire; and (3) the abandonment of Yiddish; for the children, drawn into the cultural and political currents of Germany, neither could nor would maintain a dialect of their own, particularly in view of its close resemblance to the language of the country.

The more unyielding the older generation was to these changes the stronger the feeling grew among the younger people that an inseparable barrier separated Judaism from European culture. Furthermore, as the profession of the Jewish faith disqualified men from public office in many sections of Western Europe, Judaism became a burden and a misfortune to men who set their career above their honor. Without the strength of conviction that impelled the Jews of former ages to martyrdom for their faith, these men readily consented to be sprinkled with the waters of the baptismal font to gain admittance into society or political life. Under these conditions a veritable conversionist epidemic broke out among the German Jews.

Far-seeing leaders beheld the danger signal. They recognized that in order to save Judaism, the young generation had to be impressed with the truth that to be a German in culture and in politics was not inconsistent with being a loyal Jew, that Judaism as a living faith must be distinguished from the forms in which it is expressed, and that the spirit of Judaism was still young and vigorous, capable of producing noble souls. Their own Moses Mendelssohn served them as the best illustration of the possibility of uniting the best in European culture with Judaism. Mendelssohn also served them as an object-lesson. While in his strength of character and deep Jewish devotion, he could observe all the details of the old law, his



children failed to reach his high standard and fell away from Judaism altogether. What alienated them from their father's religion was not its beautiful spirit, striving after truth and holiness, but rather certain unattractive, and, in some instances, outlandish forms. It, therefore, became evident to these men of vision that the only power that could stem the evil of apostasy was, as Dr. Kaufmann Kohler expressed it, "the inner reform of Judaism which would again imbue the Jew with self-respect while disclosing to him his historical mission in the world."

With this aim in view, Israel Jacobson (1768-1828) established the first Reform service in connection with his school at Seesen and later at Cassel. Impressed with the success of his attempt, he built, at his own expense, the first Reform Temple at Seesen and dedicated it on July 17, 1810. He supplied his temple with an organ, introduced prayers in German, in addition to those recited in Hebrew, also German hymns, sung by the boys. In 1811 he confirmed the first class of Jewish boys. Political conditions compelled him to remove to Berlin in 1815. There he opened his home for weekly religious services, the chief feature of which was the sermon, preached in German. Among the preachers were Zunz, Kley, and Auerbach. The Orthodox elements denounced these services to the government and succeeded in stopping all Reform activities in Berlin for some time. In the meanwhile Kley went to Hamburg, to supervise the Jewish Free School, where he organized a Reform society and erected the famous Hamburg Temple (1818). A special prayer book was prepared for use in the temple which strove "to re-establish the external conditions of devotion without clashing too much with the current views on prayer, and to remove such passages as were in conflict with the civil position of the Jew." The Orthodox Jews of Hamburg tried to repeat the work of their brethren in Berlin, but this time they failed. The temple remained open and steadily grew in influence under the leadership of Kley

and his associate preacher Gotthold Solomon. In 1829 the Hamburg Temple established a branch at Leipsic, where services were held during the busy annual fairs, with Auerbach as preacher. The merchants from all parts of the world that visited these fairs became acquainted with the temple services and carried its spirit to their home cities. Soon Reform congregations sprang up in different parts of Germany, Austria and Hungary, France, Denmark, and England.

Though originating in Germany, it is in America, where the congregations were new and, therefore, freer from antiquated usages, that Reform took deep root and soon grew into a greater power than in the old European communities. Under the influence of its liberal spirit, the German Jewish settlers led by men like Isaac M. Wise, Max Lilienthal, Samuel Adler, Samuel Hirsch, David Einhorn, B. Felsenthal, S. K. Gutheim, K. Kohler, and others laid the foundations of a noble type of Judaism in this land of freedom. Stately synagogues were dedicated to the worship of God. Schools and charitable institutions were established. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations was launched to unite the congregations throughout the land for concerted religious effort. The Hebrew Union College was established in Cincinnati under the auspices of the Union, under the leadership of Dr. Isaac M. Wise, to train rabbis for American Jewish pulpits. Further to unite American Israel, the rabbis of the country organized themselves into a Central Conference of American Rabbis, that the counsel of all may be brought to bear upon the vexing questions that arise from year to year. The Central Conference has had as its object the removal of the tendency toward individualism in religious life, which came by way of reaction toward the severe suppression of all private judgment under Orthodoxy. This has, in a great measure, been achieved through the publication of the two volumes of the Union Prayerbook which have helped to standardize the Sabbath and holiday worship in the synagogues

throughout the land. The Central Conference of American Rabbis together with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations have not only fostered Judaism in the hearts of our people but have endeavored to present it in the right light before the non-Jewish world and thereby to form the right basis for mutual respect and co-operation.

In the temple at Vienna the famous cantor Solomon Sulzer regenerated the old music of the synagogue. Out of the sighs and groans of long ages of martyrdom and out of the heart-throbs of countless generations, he constructed the soul-stirring songs of triumph of the new synagogue. He was followed by Naumbourg at Paris, by Lewandowski at Berlin, and by Kaiser, Stark, Schlessinger, and by hosts of others on both sides of the Atlantic, who enriched the Jewish ritual with their glorious song. In the words of Gustav Karpeles, this "band of gifted men disengaged the old harps from the willows, and once more lured the ancient melodies from their quivering strings."

The early Reformers limited their constructive work to the external side of Judaism. They firmly believed that it could be regenerated through the removal of the old abuses from the synagogues and through the modernization of its mode of worship. It was left to their successors to see that the whole structure of Judaism needed thorough renovation. Many petty regulations such as the prohibition of shaving, the requirement that women wear *Scheitels* (wigs) the institution of the *Mikvah* (ritual bath) as an adjunct of the synagogue, and customs like *Tashlikh* (propitiatory rite based on the literal interpretation of Micah 7:19 b) and *Kapparoth Schlagen* (substitution of a fowl for a human being as a means of atonement) lost all religious meaning and appeared ludicrous. Many laws regulating family life, particularly in regard to marriage and divorce, grew increasingly burdensome. Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* and Judah Leon Gordon's Hebrew poems (*Kozo Sbel Yod and Shomeres Yovom*) present some of the tragic conse-

quences of the outworn marriage and divorce laws. The regulations of Sabbath and holiday observance, too, often became irksome, turning at least for some people feasts into fasts, and days of joy into days of mourning. In Russia-Poland and in Galicia no less than in Germany a revision of the laws governing Jewish life was strenuously urged, but the leaders of Orthodoxy turned a deaf ear to all such demands. Their adamantine rigor further alienated the progressive element from Judaism. It therefore became the task of the leaders of Reform to grapple seriously with the whole problem not alone by removing the abuses from Jewish life but by finding justification for their action in Jewish tradition. Their task was a double one: to redefine Judaism and to defend it from the attacks of skeptics and agnostics as well as to ward off the assaults of their Orthodox opponents.

Extraordinary caution was needed in their work. At first the early Reformers, like Aaron Chorin, tried to justify themselves on the ground of rabbinic law, often using talmudic authority for cutting down talmudic regulations. Soon they found this method wholly inadequate. The more they were attacked on the basis of the Talmud the stronger grew the belief among some of them that Judaism to be truly revived, must be purged of Rabbinism and of the Talmud and re-established on the foundations of the Bible. A dangerous line of cleavage was thus drawn between so-called "Mosaism" and "Rabbinism." In this spirit the Frankfort Society of Friends of Reform issued the following declaration of principles (1843): "(1) We recognize the possibility of unlimited development in the Mosaic religion. (2) The collection of controversies, dissertations, and prescriptions commonly designated by the name Talmud possesses for us no authority, from either the dogmatic or the practical standpoint. (3) A Messiah who is to lead back the Israelites to the land of Palestine is neither expected nor desired by us; we know no fatherland except that to which we belong by birth or citizenship."

Reform Judaism entered upon a more fertile phase of its development with the labors of the great systematic thinker Abraham Geiger, whose motto was: "Aus der Vergangenheit schöpfen, in der Gegenwart leben, fuer die Zukunft arbeiten." Drawing his inspiration from the past, he saw no reason for discarding the Talmud and the whole body of Rabbinic thought. He belonged to the group of distinguished Jewish scholars who set themselves to the task of rehabilitating Judaism in the eyes of the learned world by applying the scientific methods, acquired in the universities, to its history and literature.

The results of their labors led to an almost revolutionary conception of Judaism. It showed that the law of evolution which Goethe and Darwin discovered in the organic and inorganic world is operative also in the domain of religion, that instead of being the product of supernatural revelation, it is the outgrowth of man's eternal quest for God. Judaism, as a careful study of its history shows, is not a religion that was established at any one time in the past, either by Moses or by any other man or group of men, but a body of truth, a growing tree of life. Moses took the kernel of the belief in one God, which came down to him from Abraham and planted it in the hearts of the newly liberated Israelites. The prophets, priests, and sages fostered its growth. From the first commandment, declaring the unity of God, they developed the whole moral, civic, and ritual law. Their words, embodied in the Bible, were further amplified by the rabbis in the Talmud and in the Codes of Law. Naturally not everything that was evolved in the course of the ages, whether in the biblical or in the talmudic periods, was progressive. Some things were indeed retrogressive. But at no time was there any complete break between what some called "Mosaism" and "Rabbinism." The same spirit that created the Bible also created the Talmud and the Schulchan Arukh. Throughout our history the spirit of Judaism related itself to the conditions of our people's life,

to their needs and hopes. Like the rose it drank in not only the sunshine, but also the moisture of the soil in which it grew. That accounts for the varied forms which it assumed in the course of different ages and in different lands. This law also explains the rise of the Reform Movement, the latest link in the long chain of development of historic Judaism.

Judaism, being an ever-growing body of truth, aiming in each age to help man find his place in life, not merely gives us the right but imposes upon us the duty to adapt its religious truths to the changed conditions of the present day. The flower that blossomed last year was fresh and fragrant, but today it is faded and withered. In our love for the flower, it is not enough to press it between the pages of a book or to turn it into perfume; it is necessary to plant its seeds anew that the old flower may blossom again in the new one. If Judaism is dear to us—and dear it must be to thinking men and women, because it is one of the noblest faiths of modern times and one of the finest products of the spirit—we must transplant its noble truths into the hearts of modern men and women.

The pioneers of Reform labored in the belief that Judaism is not a thing of the past, confined to the Ghetto, but a living spirit for today and tomorrow, equally as needed in and equally as applicable to the new conditions in lands of freedom. As the fires of the French Revolution devoured the structure and foundation of decayed European politics and religion, these men with Maccabean zeal rescued the sacred oil of the synagogue to feed the flames of the *Menorah*. Largely due to their labors the light of Judaism has been kept alive in Germany, France, England, and America. Isaac D'Israeli, the distinguished English author and father of the even more distinguished statesman, Benjamin D'Israeli, is reported to have said to one of the founders of the Reform synagogue in London: "Had these changes been introduced at an earlier period, neither I nor my family would have seceded from the Jewish community." To this the Rev. Isidore Harris adds that "it is

undoubtedly true that English Reform has been the means of keeping within the fold many who otherwise must have been lost to us, as happened in the case of some of the chief families of the Bevis Marks Synagogue." What is true of England is true of all other lands, where the walls of the Ghetto fell and where the Jew was drawn into the general social, cultural, and political life around him. There Reform appeared as a beacon light to the perplexed, guiding them in the faith and in the idealism of our fathers. Many congregations that at one time repudiated Reform ideas in principle have been compelled by circumstances to adopt them in practice. Prayers and sermons in the vernacular, mixed choirs, instrumental music, family pews, confirmation of girls as well as of boys have become part of conservative congregational life. In fact New-Orthodoxy or conservative Judaism follows tardily and timidly where Reform has bravely led the way. In their "Orthodoxy," its leaders are more "Reform" than the avowed Reformers of a couple of generations ago. Reform has bridged the gap between Judaism and the new political, social, and cultural life of our people in Western Europe and in America, and has developed under the loving care of rabbis and laymen into a magnificent body of religious truth that cheers the heart, delights the mind, and crowns Israel with new glory.

Reform Judaism does not claim to be a new religion. It is in every respect a mere link in the chain of Israel's historical continuity. It does not separate itself from the body of Israel. Despite differences of religious interpretation of life, we, of the Reform wing, lay strong emphasis upon the ideal of Jewish spiritual—as distinguished from political or geographical—unity. The Children of Israel constitute a religious brotherhood. Reform Judaism as the outgrowth of long ages of religious development is bound to Jewish tradition. We celebrate the holidays that have come down to us from the past. It is only in accommodation to the new conditions, under which the Jews are now living in lands of freedom, that

some congregations instituted a Sunday service, but none have substituted Sunday for the historical day of rest. The Second Days of the Festivals (see the *Jewish Encyclopedia* for their origin) were abrogated not only because our people found it extremely difficult to observe them, but also because they have no scriptural basis. With the exception of Rosh Hashana, they are not observed even by the strictest Orthodox Jews of Palestine. Of the old ceremonials we try to keep all those that are vital to the life of the Jew. We look with deep reverence upon our religious literature. But we do not regard it as the sole source of authority in our religion. The Bible is the foundation but not the whole structure of Judaism. The Bible did not create Judaism; but Judaism created the Bible.

For our religious knowledge we do not depend exclusively upon tradition, the Bible, the Talmud, or the philosophic writings of earlier days. With the great teachers of the past, we believe that in a limited way our reason and our conscience can help us fathom some of the mysteries of God's existence. If with all our minds and with all our hearts we truly seek Him, we shall truly find Him. Our sacred literature and traditions must guide us on our way; but we ourselves must search after God. Modern science which has disclosed the wonders of earth and sky has revealed to us in a new light the majesty of our God, of that "Mekor Chayim"—source of all existence, whose life throbs in star and flower and heart of man, through whom we live and move and have our being. He is not a mere blind force that vitalizes matter, but a self-conscious, reasoning Being, who knows the needs of the world, of nations, and of individual men. To Him we can turn in prayer and be strengthened in our weakness, comforted in our sorrow, and restored from the selfishness and filth of sin to a holy and pure life. Humanly speaking, we can find no more sacred word by which to stammer forth His great name than that of "Father." In His hands we intrust our spirit, in life and in death.



In former ages our people made much of the resurrection of the body and of the bliss of the soul in the hereafter. Men like Maimonides long ago came to look upon the Gan Eden and Gehenna as mere desires on the part of man but not names of actualities. And the saintly man, whom the late Professor Schechter quotes in one of his essays, even exclaimed in prayer unto God: "I have no wish for thy Paradise, nor any desire for the bliss in the world to come. I want thee and thee alone." Death can have no terror for us. When we are estranged from God our very life is death; but with God even death is life to us. The righteous live even after death. Their work remains behind them; their noble spirits, their hopes, their prayers and—what is greatest of all—their examples live on as blessings. It, therefore, follows that our whole life depends upon the way we spend our energies while moving in the midst of the duties, of the heat and the struggle of the day, upon the patience with which we endure our trials and the fortitude with which we bear our burdens. We consider it insufficient to say: "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world." Our ideal should rather be this: "Because God's in his heaven, we must see that all's right with the world." We, as men and as Jews, must promote the cause of justice on earth, defend the weak, and relieve the oppressed. To teach and, through our lives, to exemplify these truths, and thus to bring mankind nearer to the spirit of God, we consider to be the holy vocation or mission of our people.

The ideals of Reform Judaism are expressed clearest in its liturgy. The following paragraphs are typical of the Union Prayerbook:

Almighty and merciful God, Thou hast called Israel to Thy service and found him worthy to be Thy witness unto the peoples of the earth. Give us grace to fulfil this mission with zeal tempered by wisdom and guided by regard for other men's faith. May our lives prove the strength of our own belief in the truths we proclaim. May our bearing toward our neighbors, our faithfulness in every sphere of duty, our

compassion for the suffering and our patience under trial show that He whose law we obey is indeed the God of all goodness, the Father of all men, that to serve Him is perfect freedom and to worship Him the soul's purest happiness.

O Lord, open our eyes that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time; for Thou hidest not Thy light from any generation of Thy children that feel after Thee and seek Thy guidance.

We pray for the masters and teachers in Israel that they may dispense Thy truth with earnestness and zeal, yet not wanting in charity. May the law of love be found on their lips, and may they by precept and example lead many in the ways of righteousness.

Bless, O God, all endeavors, wherever made, to lift up the fallen, to redeem the sinful, to bring back those who wander from the right path and restore them to a worthy life. Truly, O God, we long to adore Thee in the temple of holiness, at the altar of truth and with the offerings of our love. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

The eternal hope of Israel is expressed in the Prayer of Adoration from which we quote the second part:

May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come when all men shall invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye, when all inhabitants of the earth shall know that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine image, recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before Thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Lord will reign forever and ever.

On that day the Lord shall be One and His name shall be One.